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**Herder's Ideas and the Pan-Slavism:  
A Conceptual-Historical Approach**

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## Abstract

The impact of Johann Gottfried Herder on the Slavic intellectuals of the Nineteenth century is well-known among researchers in the fields of history, linguistics and anthropology. His “prophecy” about the future of the Slavs influenced the writings of Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik, among others, writers who became some of the most prominent figures of the Pan-Slavic cultural movement of the first half of the Nineteenth century. Their influence on Serbian intellectuals, especially on those living in Buda and Pest, was visible. However, this “Herderian prophecy” also came to the Serbian readership indirectly, mostly through the efforts of scholars like Šafárik. The prediction of a bright future for all Slavs was introduced either as original contributions of the aforementioned scholars, or as the translated excerpts of their most famous works. One of the themes presented in the Serbian periodicals was the notion of the “enslavement” of Slavs by Germans and Hungarians in the Early Middle Ages. In order to better understand the meaning of “Herder’s prophecy” and its reception and adaptation by the aforementioned Pan-Slavists, this paper utilizes Reinhart Koselleck’s writings on conceptual history.

**Keywords:** Johann G. Herder, Pan-Slavism, conceptual history, Ján Kollár, Pavel J. Šafárik, Serbian periodicals

## Introduction

The work *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* by Johann Gottfried Herder was highly influential on what later became the Pan-Slavic movement, especially in the decades prior to the revolutions of 1848. His “prophetic” remarks concerning the future of the Slavs and their general nature were adopted in writings by notable Pan-Slavists ranging from poetry to history, to linguistics and to anthropology. Herder’s writings, and especially the sections on the Slavs, were essentially future-oriented, which explains the reception they received from various Slavic intellectuals. In what follows, I attempt to interpret Herder’s writings on the Slavs within the framework of Reinhart Koselleck’s understanding of historical time.

The impact that Herder had on both the Pan-Slavic movement, and the region of Eastern and Central Europe in general, in terms of language and emerging nationalisms, has been explored by a number of authors. István Berend argues that Herder introduced a concept of “cultural-linguistic nationalism” which played a prevalent role in the region of East-Central Europe. As well as inspiring the Slavs by exalting them and their potential future, he also admired the Hungarians, while predicting their assimilation

into the surrounding nations.<sup>1</sup> This potential “death of nation,” known in Hungarian as *nemzetihalál*, was a topic of discussion among Hungarian scholars of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries. In his article “Herder hamis próféta.” *Kazinczy és a nyelvhalál* [“Herder is a false prophet.” Kazinczy and the language death] Sándor Hites describes Ferenc Kazinczy’s, the noted Hungarian poet, linguist and language reformer, reaction to Herder’s “prophecies” regarding the Hungarian language (and, subsequently, the people) accompanied with his interactions with other Hungarian scholars including Ferenc Verseghy, László Teleki, and others.<sup>2</sup>

More recent works on Herder’s influence and the reception given to his writings by the Czech and Slovaks include that of Robert B. Pynsent, who argues that Ján Kollár not only diverged from some of Herder’s claims, but also that he openly opposed some of his conclusions and ideas.<sup>3</sup> Also, Róbert Kiss-Szemán and Marcella Husová Rossová have acknowledged the influence of Herder on Kollár, in their article on the historical work of the latter. However, they also cited Hungarian sources that influenced Kollár’s work *Dobré vlastnosti Národu Slowanského* [The Good Qualities of the Slavic people], which questions to an extent the primacy of Herder’s thought in the case of the famous Slovakian poet.<sup>4</sup> Alexander Maxwell argues that Kollár did not just blindly follow Herder’s ideas, but that he also developed them further, often reaching his own conclusions, which were represented later in his idea of literary Pan-Slavism.<sup>5</sup>

This paper takes a novel approach by exploring the impact of Herder’s thought on the Serbian readership in the first half of nineteenth century, especially on those Serbs

<sup>1</sup> Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (LA: University of California Press, 2003), 48–49.

<sup>2</sup> Kazinczy labelled Herder a “false prophet,” as he recalls that “he laughed over Herder’s writings on the disappearance of the Hungarian language and nation.” See Sándor Hites, “‘Herder hamis próféta.’ Kazinczy és a nyelvhalál [‘Herder is a false prophet.’ Kazinczy and the language death]” in *Ragyogni és munkálni. Kultúratudományi tanulmányok Kazinczy Ferencről* [To shine and work. Cultural studies researches about Ferenc Kazinczy], ed. Attila Debreczeni and Gönczy Monika (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2010), 29.

<sup>3</sup> For example, they differed on the questions of notions of multinational states, which Kollár accepts, and the issues of difference between patriotism, favored by Herder, and nationalism, promoted by his Slovakian follower. See Robert B. Pynsent, “Slávy Herder,” in *Ján Kollár a slovanská vzájomnosť. Genéza nacionalizmu v strednej Európe* [Ján Kollár and Slavic reciprocity. Genesis of nationalism in Central Europe], ed. T. Ivantyšynová (Bratislava: Spoločnosť pre dejiny a kultúru strednej a východnej Európy - Historický ústav SAV, 2006), 11–24.

<sup>4</sup> Róbert Kiss-Szemán and Marcella Husová Rossová, “Historičnosť a kreace neboli Dobré vlastnosti Národu Slowanského?” [Historicity and Creation or The Good Qualities of the Slavic people?], *Česká literatura* 57, no. 6 (2009): 802–816.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Maxwell, “Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography,” *Traditiones* 40, no. 2 (2011): 79–95.

participating in their cultural organization and press in Buda and Pest, in the Kingdom of Hungary. The research demonstrates that the Serbian intelligentsia were involved in the Czech and Slovakian dominated Pan-Slavic movement in both Buda and Pest. Herder's ideas were adopted primarily through the work of Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik. The latter would use Serbian print to further develop Herder's thoughts about the "enslavement" of the Slavs in the past, a concept also analyzed in this paper.

### Koselleck's conceptual analysis

In his writings on the concept of *revolution* and about the possibility of predicting future events, Koselleck noted that there were differences between people who, in one way or another, wrote about the upcoming political changes in France. By comparing the predictions of Denis Diderot, Christophe Martin Wieland, Frederick the Great, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others, he determined that they based their assumptions on the current political and social state of affairs, by taking examples from Antiquity.<sup>6</sup> Their predictions, regardless of how close some were, were largely disproven by reality itself, as well as the speed and unpredictability of the changes in France that came after 1789. Koselleck concluded that the more their predictions were based on past historical experiences the greater was the chance of them repeating. The key point here was that when these past events were located in the "multilayeredness of historical experience." Koselleck made a distinction between three temporal planes where the events might occur: short-term actions, middle-term procedural constraints, and a "plane of metahistorical duration," which he explained as "long-term, rather, permanently repeatable possibilities."<sup>7</sup> Those authors, like Voltaire and Wieland (more specifically, his 1787 prediction of a peaceful revolution in France) who desired a "uniqueness of the coming revolution" to manifest, failed to place their narratives within any of these planes, because their assumptions were coming from the spirit of their age, that of the Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 24–25, 48–49.

<sup>7</sup> Koselleck also explained how these planes differ among each other. The second was the one where an observer could extract a course of events that would be placed in their predictions. The repetition of the revolutions, or rather political changes, is one of them. The last temporal plane was reserved for more or less timeless truths that were unchangeable throughout history, and they were construed by the authors (like those from antiquity) who had the desire to find them in the first place. See Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 143–146.

<sup>8</sup> Koselleck, *Conceptual History*, 141–142.

When Koselleck compares the predictions of Wieland, on the one hand, and those of Diderot, on the other, we can see how the latter was closer to correctly predicting the outcome of the anticipated changes in France. Wieland might be, as Koselleck noted, influenced by the “optimistic Enlightenment hopefulness,” or maybe he had an English example of the Glorious Revolution in mind, which had a peaceful outcome. Nevertheless, the ideas of progress and the uncertainty of the future, still more utopian than dystopian, were evident here. The crucial period of change was the period of the Enlightenment when the concepts of time, revolution, history, and others changed significantly, in comparison to their previous understanding among the educated intelligentsia in Europe. The concept of history changed in the decades between 1760 and 1780, when it stopped describing a collection of events from the past and gained its singular meaning. At the same time, Koselleck notes that the concept of the “philosophy of history” also emerged, in which past events lost their “exemplary nature” and when “the discovery of the uniqueness of historical processes and the possibility of progress” appeared.<sup>9</sup> History, as it was already stated, was not anymore an accumulation of stories, events or a part of a theological and eschatological interpretation of the world, but instead possessed its own agency. This also meant that the understandings of the past and the ways of how the time flows were interpreted by following certain patterns, which had been present since Antiquity, and in the writings of notable theologians. However, unlike the Ancient Greek debates about the best suitable constitutions for mankind, or the writings of Saint Augustine about the temporality of this world and its perfect counterpart in the Heavens, in the Eighteenth century more and more authors began to produce universal histories which led to the development of the philosophical approach to the concept of “historical time.”<sup>10</sup> In the words of Koselleck: “The concept of “history pure and simple” laid the foundation for a historical philosophy, within which the transcendental meaning of history as space of consciousness became contaminated with history as space of action.”<sup>11</sup> Koselleck’s schematization of “temporal experience” included the division of the irreversibility of events, the repeatability of events and the “contemporaneity of noncontemporaneous (Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigen).” The last refers to the “prognostic structure of historical time” and consists of the prognosis of the future, based on the events that already exist in the present, even though their development still remains uncertain. The evolution of the concept of time was explained elsewhere by Koselleck. Its abandoning of the previous eschatological structure and its opening space for foresight and predictions

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<sup>9</sup> Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 93–104.

<sup>11</sup> Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 93.

also culminated in the epoch of the Enlightenment.<sup>12</sup> The “doctrine of Providence,” designed by God, was replaced by that created by man, stemming from the ongoing process of the secularization of thought.<sup>13</sup>

### Herder's “philosophy of history”

In contrast to this “process of secularization of thought”, the German poet and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*<sup>14</sup> believed that the future of mankind is to achieve this Providence of God by creating flourishing societies based on “reason and justice.” He located this goal within the natural world. There, mankind would gradually adjust and adapt, and over time reach a degree of a more durable humanity. Herder argued that the Providence of God had for its ultimate goal the well-being of all creatures.<sup>15</sup> His thought was, therefore, based in spirituality but perceived through the rules of the natural world.<sup>16</sup>

Herder's work could be understood as an attempt at writing a universal history in the form of a “philosophy of history.” Koselleck's divisions of the temporal experiences, more specifically the possibility of deducing the course of the “historical time,” are present in the work of Herder. As was already mentioned, his idea of the gradual advancement of human civilization to the state of stable societies based on reason and logic had a prophetic tone, regardless of the humility of the author about his capabilities to predict what would happen. Herder sought a “philosophy of history” because “as everything in the world has its philosophy and science, there must not also be a philosophy and science of what concern us most nearly, of the history of mankind at large. Everything enforced this upon my mind; metaphysics and morals, physics and natural history, and lastly religion above all the rest.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, he tried to diversify his approach to the understanding of the history of the mankind and the place of humans in the world,

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<sup>12</sup> Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 9–26, 26–43

<sup>13</sup> Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 102.

<sup>14</sup> The original title of the work was *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91).

<sup>15</sup> Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of a Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London: Printed by Luke Hapfard, 1800), vol. 1, Kindle edition (2016), Preface (Location 152).

<sup>16</sup> Herder did not separate nature from God, which he stated explicitly in order to distance himself from the naturalists who did so. See Herder, *Outlines*, Preface (Location 223). Therefore, he was a follower of Spinoza, by equating nature with the God, or in words of Dragan Prole, Herder sought for “internal connection with which a unique display of the spiritual and material world would be enabled.” See Dragan Prole, “Pojam tradicije kod Herdera i Kanta” [The notion of tradition at Herder and Kant], *Arbe* 1, no. 2 (2004): 210.

<sup>17</sup> Herder, *Outlines*, Preface (Location 176).

according to God's plan. However, his predictions remained similar to those desires of Voltaire and Wieland about the "upcoming revolution," which Koselleck dubbed a part of "optimistic Enlightenment hopefulness." Even though Herder criticized, as a follower of Rousseau's ideas of naturalism, some ideas of the Enlightenment, he was still imbued with the spirit of it.<sup>18</sup>

Herder's *Outlines* is also one of the seminal works in the field of anthropology, even though the term itself was not used by the author.<sup>19</sup> Herder emphasized the importance of folk poetry and songs and the vernacular in general. There, he argued the idea that the history of the world consisted of the individual histories of different peoples, all with the necessary components that he emphasized. The language, according to Herder, had the ability to let these peoples express themselves and manifest their true character as a nation. If these peoples cherished their languages and based their cultural identities around them, they would elevate themselves from "the state of barbarism." Herder saw the lack of native languages as the reason for why their state was "so barbarous" for a long time. Berend states that Herder pioneered the collection of folk songs and poetry, which was evident in his works *Volkslieder* [Folk Songs] (1778) and *Stimmen der Völker* [Voices of the People] (1807). Furthermore, Berend states that "Herder's lifelong devotion to folk poetry combined the national concept with the democratic idea. By making a fetish out of folk poetry and the folk, Herder culturally incorporated the peasantry into the nation."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Miroslav Hroch argues that, even though Herder is cited as the source of Romanticism and some of its ideas, he falls under the period of the Enlightenment. However, Hroch notes that some of his ideas would be appropriated by the Romanticists, who would use them to "strengthen their arguments." See Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček, ed., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945)*, vol. 2 (CEU Press: Budapest, 2007), 10. Alexander Maxwell shares Hroch's opinion in describing Herder as a "characteristic product of a Enlightenment, even though his "theory in history rested on theological foundations." See Maxwell, "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography," 80.

<sup>19</sup> Maxwell thinks it would be wrong to consider that Herder was somehow more an anthropologist rather than a philosopher. See Maxwell, "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography," 79–80.

<sup>20</sup> Berend, *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 48–49.



### Herder's "prophecy" about the future of the Slavs and the Pan-Slavists

Herder's writing had a significant impact on Slavic intellectuals, and especially on the Pan-Slavist theorists, like Josef Dobrovský<sup>21</sup>, Pavel J. Šafárik,<sup>22</sup> and Ján Kollár<sup>23</sup>. Hans Kohn, in his study on the ideas of Pan-Slavism, saw this influence of Herder as twofold. His ideas about the importance of the vernacular languages, which he saw as a foundation of civilization for uneducated people around the world, received a great reception among the Slavic intellectuals in the first half of the Nineteenth century. However, more influential were Herder's ideas concerning the future of the Slavs, which he detailed in his *Outlines on the history of Mankind*, and which enthused the thoughts and hearts of the incoming Pan-Slavists. This belief in a bright Slavic future, however, was idealistic and not grounded in reality. This optimistic image made a huge impression not only on the Pan-Slavist intellectuals but also on future generations of Czech, Polish, Russian, and Croat politicians.<sup>24</sup> Herder writes in his *Outlines*:

[...] they [Slavs] followed the working of mines, understood the smelting and casting of metals, manufactured, fabricated linen, brewed mead, planted fruit trees, and led, after a fashion, a gay and musical life. They were liberal, hospitable to excess, lovers of pastoral freedom, but submissive and obedient, enemies to spoil and rapine. All this preserved them not from oppression, nay, it contributed to their being oppressed. For, as they were never ambitious of sovereignty, had among them no hereditary princes addicted to war, and thought little of paying tribute so they could but enjoy their lands in peace, many nations, chiefly of German origin, injuriously oppressed them.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829), often referred to as “The Grand Old Man” of Slavic studies, was a Czech historian and philologist. His best-known works are *Geschichte der Böhmischen Sprache und alten Literatur* (1792), *Slowanka zur Kenntnis der Slawischen Literatur* (1814) and *Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822). See Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism. Its History and Ideology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 5–6.

<sup>22</sup> Pavel J. Šafárik (1795–1861) was Czech scholar of Slovak origin who published works from history and philology, of which the most famous were *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* (1826) and *Slovanské starožitnosti* (1837). See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 4–6.

<sup>23</sup> Ján Kollár (1793) was a Slovak poet and scholar whose most famous works were *Slávy Dcera* (1824) and *O literárnej vzájomnosti medzi rozličnými kmeňmi a nárečiami slovanského národa* (1837). See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 8–11.

<sup>24</sup> Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, ix–xi.

<sup>25</sup> Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9903–9909).

He predicted a bright future for all Slavs, referring to them as a collective (like other peoples he described), and that their potential would bring forth “the new age of Man”, which would in turn replace the decaying culture of Europe:

The wheel of changing Time, however, revolves without ceasing, and as these nations inhabit for the most part the finest country of Europe, if it were completely cultivated, and its trade opened, while it cannot be supposed but that legislation and politic, instead of a military spirit must and will more and more promote quiet industry and peaceful commerce between different states, these now deeply sunk, but once industrious and happy people will at length awake from their long and heavy slumber, shake off their chains of slavery, enjoy the possession of their delightful lands from the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian mountains, from the Don to the Moldau, and celebrate on them their ancient festivals of peaceful trade and industry.<sup>26</sup>

Herder formed his ideas about the role of the Slavs and the land they inhabited after staying in Riga, where he held tenure in the period 1764-1769 under the patronage of the Russian Empress Catherine II. In his *Journal meiner Reise aus 1769* [Journal of my travel from 1769] he wrote about Ukraine, which he described as the “new Greece,” predicting it would become a focal point in the upcoming cultural renaissance of the Europe. However, as István Gombocz noted, this first “prophecy” of Herder was free of “ethnic” connotations, as it focused on the geographical position of Ukraine, its resources and the potential of all those living there. Herder supports this claim by including Russia, Poland, and Hungary as the potential benefactors of such culture.<sup>27</sup> The only problem for this “new Greece,” as John P. Sydoruk explained, was its lack of natural borders which prevented it becoming the center of cultural development at that level.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9916–9923).

<sup>27</sup> István Gombocz, “The Reception of Herder in Central Europe: Idealization and Exaggeration,” *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 33, no. 2 (1997): 115. John P. Sydoruk incorporates this full quotation from Herder, in its English translation: “One day Ukraine will become a new Greece: the beautiful climate of this country, the gay mood of its people, their musical talent, their fertile soil, etc... will one time awake; from so many small wild tribes, such as, too, the Greeks once were, there will arise a cultured nation; and her boundaries will reach the Black Sea, and from there the wide world. Hungary, and a part of Poland and of Russia would become receivers of this new culture. From the Northwest this spirit would spread over Europe, which is lying in sleep, and the same spirit of progress would be useful, too, for all of Europe.” See John P. Sydoruk, “Herder and the Slavs,” *AATSEEL Journal* 13, No. 3 (1955): 73.

<sup>28</sup> Sydoruk, “Herder and the Slavs,” 73.

Michal Kopeček states that Ján Kollár's and Pavel J. Šafárik's understanding of Pan-Slavism derived directly from the writings of Herder. He describes Kollár as "a true disciple of Herder ... [who] ... promoted the non-political and non-state-centered concept of the nation that can be applied to many countries."<sup>29</sup> This is a precise description of the so-called "Cultural Pan-Slavism" that, according to Lawrence D. Orton, found its place among the Slavs living in the Kingdom of Hungary. He differentiated it from both the Austro-Slavism (mainly present in what is today Slovenia and Czech Republic) and the "messianic strain of Pan-Slavism" (present among the Poles).<sup>30</sup> Hans Kohn coined this a "Western stage" of Panslavism, lead by the Czechs and Slovaks in the first half of the Nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik were studying during the events of the Wartburg Festival 1817,<sup>32</sup> and both incorporated the ideas of Herder, especially those on the nature and future of the Slavs, in their later work.<sup>33</sup> Kollár's epic poem *Slávy Dcera* [The Daughter of Sláva] was imbued with a sense of Slavic unity, their common origin and the bright future ahead.<sup>34</sup> The work was not only heavily influenced by Herder's "Slavic chapter," but it also heaped praise on the German poet.<sup>35</sup> For most of his life he lived and worked in Pest as a Lutheran chaplain. Both he and Šafárik were part of Czech intellectual circles, regardless of their Slovak origins. Kollár was surrounded with the Slovaks of Pest, but also with the South Slavs, mainly Serbs and Croats, who lived in Pest and Buda. His work *O literárnej vzájomnosti medzi rozličnými kmeňmi a nárečiami slovanského národa* [On literary reciprocity between the different tribes and dialects of the Slavic peoples] (1837) was in a way a product of his own beliefs, which were partially influenced by Herder and by his own life experience. Šafárik, on the other hand, was a director and a professor of the Serbian Gymnasium in Novi Sad (1819-1833), where he befriended Georgije Magarašević,

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<sup>29</sup> Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity*, vol. 2, 207.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence D. Orton, *The Prague Slav Congress of 1848* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1978), 6–7.

<sup>31</sup> Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, xiv.

<sup>32</sup> The Wartburg Festival of 1817 was a celebration organized by the German university youth (Burschenschaften), in commemoration of the three centuries of the Reformation as well as the third anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. The atmosphere of the festival was energetic and imbued with a rising sense of German unity and nationalism. See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Michal Kopeček also emphasizes the importance of the influence of the Burschenschaften movement on their ideas of Slavic unity. See Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity*, vol. 2, 206–207.

<sup>34</sup> Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity*, 208–210.

<sup>35</sup> Hans Kohn cites the extracts from Kollár's *Slávy Dcera* which praised Herder as „the friend of the Slavs”: *Kant and Wieland have no nationality. /Schiller is cold to us, Klopstock mute, /Not thus you, priest of humanitarianism. / Contrary to custom you were the first /To defend and highly praise the Slavs/For that accept from them honor and thanks /*. See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 8.

another professor, who would in 1825 create the Serbian literary magazine *Letopis Serbski* [The Serbian Annual], which became the primary literary outlet of cultural society *Matica Srpska* [The Serbian Queen Bee] and which was initially published in Pest (1826-1864).<sup>36</sup>

Šafárik's first significant work *Geschichte der slavischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* [The History of the Slavic Language and Literature according to all Dialects] (1826) followed the writings of Herder about the unity of Slavs. There, Šafárik perceived all Slavic languages as dialects of their extinct ancestral language. Added to this, the prophetic "turning wheel of Time" as a sign of the inevitable changes coming to Europe, with the Slavs at its center, featured in Šafárik's *Geschichte* as a paraphrase of Herder's famous lines.<sup>37</sup> The notion of the "peacefulness" of Slavs was also appropriated in his other work, *Slovanské starožitnosti* [The Slavic Antiquities] (1837), which he used to argue for their antique origin in Eastern Europe and their enslavement by the Germans.<sup>38</sup> Both Šafárik and Kollár were surrounded by the Slavs of the Austrian Empire, primarily those in the Kingdom of Hungary, which both influenced their work and established them among the Serbs, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes and others.

### Herder's "prophecy" in the Serbian publications of the Kingdom of Hungary

Herder was introduced to the Serbian readership indirectly, through the original contributions of Šafárik and Kollár or, more commonly, through the excerpts translated from their main works. In the very first issue of the *Letopis* in 1825 Šafárik authored an article titled *Karakter Slavenskog naroda voobšte* [A character of the Slavic people in general], which was one of his early works dedicated to the origin, history, and the character of the Slavs. This article was a rebuttal of sorts, against publications and articles produced by non-Slavic authors, who wrote disparagingly about the Slavs. Utilising twelve different examples gathered from a period of some seven decades before the time of writing, Šafárik showed how the Slavs were being slandered. They were explicitly labelled as "lazy," "wild," "drunkards," "uncivilized," "dirty," and so on, and indirectly, through underestimations of their numbers as well as through the vilifying their languages. For example, Šafárik mentions that the Hungarian scientist and professor András Dugonics equated the languages of the "Russians, Ruthenians with Gypsies," and made similar

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<sup>36</sup> Stanley B. Kimball, "The Austro-Slav Revival: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Literary Foundations," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, No. 4 (1973): 12–13.

<sup>37</sup> Gombocz, "Reception of Herder," 112.

<sup>38</sup> Orton, *Slav Congress*, 3.

remarks about the Slovak language.<sup>39</sup> Even though the examples given by Šafárik did make generalizations about a certain group of people, the responses he provided were of a similar nature, rather portrayed in a positive manner. In order to explain to his readers the true nature and character of the Slavs, Šafárik wrote: “Besides the other basic outlines of the Slavic character those which are especially distinguished are affection towards religion, hard-work, careless and innocent celebrations, love for their language, and friendliness towards the other nations.”<sup>40</sup>

Every single one of these traits Šafárik discusses in length, with arguments supported with examples from history, linguistics, his own experience and anecdotal evidence. These characteristics stem directly from a short chapter in Herder's *Outlines*. The German author was not mentioned as a direct source for all the traits, even though Šafárik does cite him in the section about the “hard-working” character of the Slavs.<sup>41</sup>

However, the conclusion to this lengthy piece was dedicated entirely to Herder, and his views on the potential future of the Slavs. In short, due to their dire circumstances at the time, especially in the domain of cultural development and the number of their cultural institutions, the language was an important vessel which could assist their progress, preserve their cultural uniqueness and maintain connections with their ancestors. Šafárik ends the article with a “comforting message of Herder,” directly citing his famous prediction made in his *Outlines* about the Slavs.<sup>42</sup>

Teodor Pavlović, who was an editor of *Letopis* (1832-1841) and also of a Serbian newspaper published in Pest, *Serbski narodni list* [Serbian People's Paper] (1835-1848), was also imbued with the ideas of Pan-Slavism and he befriended many prominent Slavs in Buda and Pest, including Kollár himself. In his newspapers, Pavlović would often include Slavic themes, but one article in particular published in 1835 directly referred to Herder and his ideas about the Slavs. Titled *Mnjenje o Slavjanima* [The Opinion About the Slavs], this piece was written by the editor himself, and while appearing objective it is in fact a restatement of the thought of the famous German thinker. It is peculiar to note how Pavlović refers to Herder, as one of the “wisest of the Germans and of all the peoples.” The article itself is a direct translation of the famous “Slavic chapter,” even though its length was altered by Pavlović. In his summary of the chapter, Pavlović redacted the parts

<sup>39</sup> *Serbskij Letopis* [Serbian Annual], ed. Georgije Magarašević, vol. 1, 1825, 70–71.

<sup>40</sup> *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 86.

<sup>41</sup> Šafárik wrote: “How Herder tended to acknowledge the hard-work [nature] of the Old Slavs was mentioned above.” It was not anywhere to be found in the preceding text, so it might be possible that Šafárik redacted name of the German while compiling this section of the text. See *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 89.

<sup>42</sup> *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 98–99.

that went into depth about which areas the Slavs had inhabited, concurring with Herder's initial geographical assessment that included the areas "between the rivers Don and Elbe, and between the northern sides and the Adriatic Sea." This description of the areas they inhabited was without chronological frame, except for that referring to the future South Slavs, who were admitted by the emperor Heraclius "into Dalmatia, and the kingdoms of Slavonia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Dalmatia were founded by them."<sup>43</sup> The article ends with the editor quoting Herder's "prophecy of a peaceful, mindful and happy future for the Slavs."<sup>44</sup> This "prophecy" of Herder was not explained further, and remains a wishful thought. The reason for this redaction, where the parts in which Herder wrote that the Slavs will "awake from their long and heavy slumber, shake off the chains of slavery," might lie in Pavlović's desire to avoid censorship, as he did not have the right to comment on political themes, nor would it be wise for him to make such bold claims in the "Age of Metternich."

It is also worth noting that the *Serbski narodni list* would typically have a citation under the title at the beginning of each issue. Placed on the front page, these selected quotations would encapsulate the thrust of the articles and would also directly promote its message to the readership. Some of these headlines would carry the Pan-Slavic messages of authors like Dobrovský, who was inspired by Herder. His quotation on the front page of the papers from 1838 is imbued with a narrative of kindness towards the Slavs and their oppression by the Germans.<sup>45</sup> The other example, from the same year, would be that of Kollár, whose citation called for cooperation between the Slavs in the literary and

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<sup>43</sup> Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9881–9890) For the educated mind of the Enlightenment, and for those generations that followed that age, this reference to the Roman emperor Heraclius (610–641) was enough to position the creation of the aforementioned Slavic kingdoms. It is peculiar why Pavlović would redact that direct reference to his own people, made by the "wisest of Germans." One interpretation would be that the ruling thought of the parts of the Serbian intelligentsia of that time was that the Serbs had longer presence in the Southeastern Europe than it was proposed by the historians of that time, especially by those of the German origin. Pavle Stamatović, who was editor of the magazines *Letopis* (1831–1832) and *Serbska Pčela* [The Serbian Bee] (1830–1831), wrote in particular about this "ancient history" of the Serbs, relying and extending the writings of Šafárik. As it was the case with the Czechs, who wrote about the antique, pre-German history of the Slavs in order to show their presence in the Eastern and Central Europe, Stamatović also wrote about the presence of the Serbs in Hungary prior to the arrival of the Magyars in the Ninth century. His writings were a part of the ongoing debate about nationality which was a prevalent issue in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s. See: Uroš Stanković, „Pavle Stamatović kao nacionalni publicista [Pavle Stamatović as a national publicist],” *Zbornik Matice Srpske za istoriju* [The proceedings of Matica Srpska in History] 83 (2011): 31–32.

<sup>44</sup> *Serbski Narodni List* [Serbian National Papers], no 7, August 19<sup>th</sup> of 1835, 56.

<sup>45</sup> *Serbski Narodni List*, no 7, February 12<sup>th</sup> of 1838, front page.

cultural spheres and the promotion of their unity.<sup>46</sup> These citations ceased to be used in the second part of 1839, but they represent a valuable source nevertheless.

### The notions of “enslavement” adopted by the Pan-Slavists

Herder wrote in his *Outlines* that the “peaceful character” of the Slavs did not protect from “oppression” but was in a way enabling it and he located its cause in their lack of a domestic ruling caste. Instead, they had foreign hereditary princes ruling over them who had a more warlike nature, like the Germans in the West and Mongols in the East. The expansion of the former into the Slavic territories received more attention in this chapter, and Herder traces their enslavement to the time of Charlemagne. Over the preceding centuries the Germanic conquest continued, as Herder writes:

What the Franks began, the Saxons completed; in whole provinces the Slavians were expatriated or made bondsmen, and their lands divided among bishops and nobles. Northern Germans ruined their commerce on the Baltic, the Danes brought their Vineta to a melancholy end, and their remains were reduced to that state to which Peruvians were subjected by the Spaniards.<sup>47</sup>

Herder's lines were paraphrased by Šafárik in his article on the general character of the Slavs which was printed in the very first issue of the *Letopis* in 1825, where he states:

Who did not read in the history of the Middle Ages what happened in the lands of Vilcs, Obodrites, Polabians, Pomeranians, Sorbs, and other Slavs, who lived between the Baltic Sea and Tatra mountains; when the deadly swords of the Franks and Germans did to the Slavs something similar what Spaniards swords did to the Peruvians?<sup>48</sup>

This notion of the subjugation of the Slavs which could be compared to those of the indigenous people in South America in the Early Modern era was repeated by the Pan-Slavic writers in their works. As István Gombocz notes, due to its “connotations of imperialist brutality” it was used by Czechs and Slovaks thinkers when they wanted to highlight the “neglect and exploitation of the Slavic territories” in the Nineteenth century by the Austrians and Hungarians.<sup>49</sup> In his article from 1825, Šafárik outright voiced his concerns about the present and the potential future of the Slavic people:

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<sup>46</sup> *Serbski Narodni*, no 7, January 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1838, front page.

<sup>47</sup> Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9909).

<sup>48</sup> *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 86-87.

<sup>49</sup> Gombocz, “The Reception of Herder in Central Europe,” 111.



Since that time when Huns, Goths, Avars, Franks, Magyars and so on, started pressing onto the Slavs, who were innocently preoccupied with the agriculture and trade, and began to entirely destroy some of them, the hatred and attacks started to overflow from the practical life into the writings, and from the writings again back to the life itself: and for that we cannot blame at all the writers from our neighboring nations, like they would not want that the Slavs again in the XIX century experience the same old and horrible acts, which occurred during the time of Heinrich the Fowler, Albrecht the Bear, Álmos, Árpád, Zsoltán, and others.<sup>50</sup>

Gombocz quotes extracts from Kollár's *The Daughter of Sláva* in which the poet laments the ill fate of the "Slava," brought about by the hands of the "Teutonia." In summary, Kollár portrays the enslavement of the Slavs, followed by unprecedented atrocities. He does so in a lyrical manner, but at the same time adheres to Herder's lines about its inception in the time of Charlemagne, which lasted for four centuries, a period the poet would happily banish from his memory.<sup>51</sup>

Subsequently, this "notion of inherent German guilt" led to the creation of a victim-like mentality, promoted by the aforementioned authors. Thus, as Gombocz writes, they left the prospect both for the righting of historical injustices and the possibility of compensation from the oppressors, a narrative which would become central to national romanticism. According to this view, nations like those of the Slavs were blameless and "innocent of expansionism," which would lead them to "assume such a role of rejuvenating and purifying Christian civilization."<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

Reinhart Koselleck's writings on conceptual history and his explanations of the evolutions, and revolutions are a valuable perspective from which the work of Herder can be observed. The concepts of "revolution," "the historical time" and "philosophy of history" assisted in my "deciphering" of the meaning of Herder's work, particularly for the Slavic intellectuals of the late Eighteenth and the first half of the Nineteenth century.

Regardless of the fact that interpreting Herder's "prophecy" through the concept of "revolution" is stretching the imagination, it was still perceived by him as a social change that would eventually engulf the entirety of Europe. The fact that the work was written in the period 1784-1791 gives this "prophecy" a deeper meaning. However, as Koselleck noted, some of these prophecies of upcoming revolution(s) in France and Europe were

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<sup>50</sup> *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 66.

<sup>51</sup> Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe," 111–112.

<sup>52</sup> Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe," 112.



an idealized interpretation by their authors, and Herder's work and especially the part about the Slavs, can be understood as that. Even though he criticized the Enlightenment, his predictions would, through Koselleck's system, fall precisely in that period.

Therefore, those "prophecies" were not rooted in the actual state of affairs the various Slavic peoples found themselves in, nor were they based on any examples from the past, regardless of Herder's desire for Ukraine to become the "new Greece." These idealistic predictions, however, found fruitful ground among the emerging Slavic scholars, who became proponents of Herder's ideas. The reason for this was precisely their "prophetic" nature. They were future-oriented and opened up a possibility of change and progress for the various Slavic peoples. The works of Kollár and Šafárik were heavily influenced by that specific part of the chapter dedicated to the Slavs in the *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*. By following Herder, they also created unrealistic prophecies about the unity and future of the Slavs; their writings would fail to pass the test of Koselleck's schematizations. Gradually, these idealizations of the past and the future would evolve into the national romanticism and the ideas of Pan-Slavists until 1848, from which year they would cease to exist in that form. The origin of that brand of national romanticism could be traced back to the notion of the "enslavement" of the Slavs by the Germans during the Early Middle Ages. This motive, in essence, was a representation of the German-Czech relations in the Nineteenth century. Further research could analyze the "translation" of this notion into the relations between the Serbs and Hungarians in the same period.

Herder's ideas were introduced to the Serbian readership through publications printed in Pest, which in turn were influenced by the existing works of the Pan-Slavists, mainly those of Kollár and Šafárik who were personally acquainted with the leading Serbian cultural figures of that time. Nevertheless, these "Herderian" motifs were already familiar and present in the Serbian printed periodicals, regardless of the lack of originality in their creation, which led to inclusion of the Serbian cultural sphere within the overarching Pan-Slavic ideology.

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